

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
4 May 2006 (04.05.2006)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2006/047328 AI

(51) **International Patent Classification:**
C08C 19144 (2006.01) *C08L 19/00* (2006.01)
C08C 19/30 (2006.01)

(21) **International Application Number:**
PCT/US2005/038017

(22) **International Filing Date:** 20 October 2005 (20.10.2005)

(25) **Filing Language:** English

(26) **Publication Language:** English

(30) **Priority Data:**
60/622,188 26 October 2004 (26.10.2004) US

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(81) **Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of national protection available):** AE, AG, AL, AM,
AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN,
CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI,
GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE,
KG, KM, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, LY,
MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO,
NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK,
SL, SM, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ,
VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW

(84) **Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every
kind of regional protection available):** ARIPO (BW, GH,
GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM,
ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),
European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI,
FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, NL, PL, PT,
RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA,
GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- with international search report
- with amended claims

Date of publication of the amended claims: 1 June 2006

*For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

(54) **Title:** FUNCTIONALIZED POLYMER WITH LINKING GROUP

(57) **Abstract:** A functionalized polymer includes an elastomer, a terminal functional group including at least one heteroatom, and a unit intermediate the elastomer and the functional group; the intermediate unit includes a terminal moiety which, in its anionic form, is less basic than a secondary amino radical ion. Methods of making the functionalized polymer and of using it with particulate filler to make, e.g., a tire tread composition also are disclosed.

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